Appearance before the House of Commons'
Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

Study on IMVE in Canada

CSIS Opening Remarks

(target: 5 minutes)

INTRODUCTION

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am grateful for the opportunity to appear again before this Committee and appreciate your taking the time to study the issue of ideologically motivated violent extremism (IMVE) in Canada. The threat IMVE poses remains a high priority for CSIS.

CSIS' MANDATE

As this Committee is well aware, CSIS has the mandate to investigate threats to the security of Canada, to advise the Government on these threats, and to take steps to reduce them.

THREAT ENVIRONMENT

Since 2014, Canadians motivated in whole or in part by their extremist ideological views have killed 21 people and wounded 40 others on Canadian soil.

This threat is a multi-faceted problem going well beyond law enforcement and national security, and requires a whole of government response, engaging social, economic and security mandates.

Using accurate terminology when discussing national security threats, particularly as it relates to violent extremism, is important. In 2019, CSIS, in consultation with the security and intelligence community and our 5 Eyes partners, took a leading role in developing terminology that more accurately depicts the violent extremist threats facing Canada.

Thanks to this effort, the Government of Canada now uses the following terminology in its discussions of the violent extremist threat landscape: Religiously Motivated Violent Extremism (RMVE), Politically Motivated Violent Extremism (PMVE), and Ideologically Motivated Violent Extremism (IMVE). With respect to the IMVE landscape in particular, our analysis demonstrated that the traditional terms of "right-wing" and "left-wing" extremism were overly simplistic and politicizing, and did not accurately reflect the complexity of the threat landscape.

While it is difficult to perfectly label the threats in this diverse landscape, this new terminology – RMVE, PMVE and IMVE – was also chosen to mirror existing domestic legislation: s.2c of the *CSIS Act* and s. 83 of the *Criminal Code*. None of these categories are necessarily mutually exclusive as extremist narratives often derive from the personal grievances of the individual.

Even within IMVE, there is no "one-size-fits-all" ideology. IMVE adherents are driven by a range of grievances, ideas and narratives including conspiracy theories. They may be motivated to commit acts of violence against others or incite violence to achieve societal change.

CSIS identifies four sub-categories of IMVE: xenophobic, gender-driven, anti-authority, and "other" grievance-driven violence. These categories are not silos, and threat actors may be motivated by more than one grievance or shift from one to another. IMVE threat actors continue to target equity-deserving groups including racialized individuals, religious minorities, the LGBTQ2 community and women.

As we know, it is not illegal to be hateful, racist or misogynist. Freedom of speech is constitutionally protected, and CSIS is expressly forbidden from investigating lawful dissent, advocacy and protest.

CSIS only investigates threat actors who rise to the threshold outlined in the *CSIS Act* – the actor must engage in activities directed toward, or in support of the threat, or use acts of serious violence for the purposes of achieving a political, religious or ideological objective. Only a small fraction of individuals who adhere to IMVE narratives go beyond the chatrooms to mobilize to violence. CSIS investigates those suspected of posing a threat to the security Canada working closely with law enforcement partners including the RCMP to ensure an appropriate response.

The rapid spread of IMVE narratives online adds to this challenge. Online platforms can serve as echo chambers of hate. IMVE adherents are able to connect and communicate anonymously online and mobilization to violence can occur rapidly. Particularly troubling is the number of youth who are espousing these narratives and inspiring others to violence.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only amplified the IMVE threat. We have seen that COVID-19 public health measures have intensified xenophobic and anti-authority narratives as well as conspiracy theories, some of which rationalize violence. We are certainly seeing these narratives play out during the vaccine roll-out.

In addition to my testimony today, I invite you all to read the CSIS 2020 Public Report, which we released earlier this spring. It details the very important work CSIS did last year to keep Canada and Canadians safe in a rapidly evolving threat environment. The Public Report makes clear that violent extremism continues to capture a significant portion of our attention and efforts, particularly IMVE-inspired online and real-world threats.

IMVE is a complex and multi-faceted threat that erodes social cohesion and CSIS is committed to fulfilling its mandate, working closely with communities and our partners across the country to keep all Canadians safe.

Finally, I would like to thank the employees of CSIS and our police colleagues for doing the difficult work necessary – often requiring exposure to vile content – to detect and investigate this threat.

With that, I would be happy to respond to any questions you may have.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):

Thank you, Chair.

For Mr. Hahlweg, I just wonder if you could expand a little bit on what you touched on regarding the fluidity of the definitions related to the categories that fall under IMVE, but also with regard to other activities, say under politically motivated and religiously motivated violent extremism.

Could you also comment on the chart that's in the 2019 report where it breaks up subcategories under ideologically motivated violent extremism? There's sort of an extra category that says "other". Is that a catch-all for mass casualty attacks? What would be included under there?

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

Thank you very much for the question.

Maybe I can start at the bottom. I think I can work my way through that a little more clearly if I start with the "other" category, because it helps to describe the narrative in the IMVE space.

For the IMVE space, the "other" category is obviously part of the four that I articulated at the outset, which include xenophobic, linked to white supremacy or neo-Nazism and ethnonationalism; anti-authority and targeting of government and law enforcement; and gender-driven, which can lead to violent misogyny. The "other" category is an example of the fluidity of this environment because we have a number of individuals who don't have a defined ideology, who aren't linked to a certain conspiracy or who move around to various groups, and it's very difficult to place them.

In the RMVE space, we have additional threat actors like al Qaeda. We have ISIS. We have a group ideology that these people adhere to.

In the IMVE space, it's quite different. We see a lot of movement depending on the nature of the grievance, and those grievances change all of the time, depending on what situation is happening. We see this in the COVID example, where that has galvanized some individuals in that space, so it's not as fluid as the other typical and more traditional categories in the RMVE space.

I hope that answers your question.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:

Yes, it does. Thank you.

It's illuminating, and it makes sense, then, that the definition also has been adapted to move away from what could be perceived to be partisan or political definitions. Also, I think it's instructive that there probably is a thread of these actors through ideologically motivated violent extremism, as well as religious and politically motivated violent extremism, if I've got you right.

I wonder if you're able to give us a sense of what the attacks were that caused the deaths of the 21 individuals, as cited in the 2020 report. I'm not sure what can be discussed in terms of investigations or which agencies might be involved to some degree—probably all—but can you give Canadians a sense of exactly what caused those deaths and which attacks they were?

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

I absolutely can.

Starting in 2014, we have the Moncton shooting perpetrated by Justin Bourque. In that shooting, three were killed and two were wounded. In 2015, we have the Halifax mall plot. That plot was disrupted and there were no casualties. In 2016, we have the Edmonton stomping attack. One individual was killed. In 2017, we have the Alexandre Bissonnette attack on the Quebec City mosque. Six individuals were killed and 19 were wounded in that attack.

In 2018, we have the Toronto van attack by Alek Minassian. Ten people were killed and 16 were wounded in that attack. In 2019, we have the Sudbury knife attack, and two people were wounded in that attack. Finally, in 2020, we have the Toronto spa attack, where one person was killed and one person was wounded.

I think I've covered that. If I've missed anything in that depiction, I will defer to my colleagues in the RCMP.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:

Thank you.

Can you give us a sense of how many plots were foiled last year that would have been planned ideologically motivated extremist acts?

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

Unfortunately, given the nature of this call, I won't be able to get into the specifics of those investigative activities, specifically on the foiled plots. Some of those investigations are still ongoing.

I can assure you that your colleagues in NSICOP and the service meet regularly to discuss those classified discussions.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:

Can you give us a general sense in terms of scale or scope? Dozens or hundreds or thousands...?

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

I can say generally that because we take the threat activity very seriously and we have a lot of assets at play in the organization.... We have regions across the country, as you know, and we have stations abroad. All these employees of our organization are working in concert with their law enforcement partners and other members in the S and I community to identify and disrupt this activity.

You will know that we have a threat reduction mandate as well in the service, so we actively take measures to try to disrupt plots. Given the fact that the activity has increased, our disruption activity, in correlation, has increased as well.

Ms. Pam Damoff:

Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to thank all of our witnesses for being here today, especially on such short notice. Your testimony is very valuable to us.

My first question is for CSIS.

You mentioned online hatred and the prevalence of "echo chambers of hate", whereby mobilization to violence can occur quite rapidly. The National Firearms Association is a group that shares offensive images online and has shared tweets that have been sympathetic to groups alleged to have IMVE affiliation. In one of them, the

tweet said, "If the police will not protect you during a violent riot, you will have to protect yourself and others".

I have personally been the subject of their comments. Recently, this committee voted to condemn remarks made by the group that discussed guillotining parliamentarians who support gun control, describing what is happening in Canada as "tyranny".

My question for you is straightforward. We've seen far too many examples where language is later masked as jokes and then turned into real-world violence, either by those making the remarks or those following. I'm just wondering; what impact do these kinds of comments have on individuals who may be radicalized by them and should we be calling it out for what it is?

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

That's an excellent question, and I think it would be useful at this time to give a snapshot of how we investigate in this space, from a CSIS perspective. I think it will help articulate the space we hold vis-à-vis other people in this landscape.

The way that we look at it organizationally is really in three tiers.

We have the first tier, which is passive engagement. There are a lot of books out there, and there are videos and chat rooms. A lot of people are listening to some of this violent, abhorrent content, but these people are passive. They're not moving to violence at this stage.

When those individuals move to our second tier of threat actions, it is a more active engagement. This is where we're seeing people not just listening but putting some propaganda out there. They're adding content, communicating and letting their voices be known. A lot of this still falls in with freedom of speech, but some of it starts to bleed into what is the third tier. That's where the service gets involved.

The third tier sees these people mobilizing to violence or potentially mobilizing to violence. In the third tier, we're seeing a lot of increased operational security by these individuals. They're not staying in the open. They're going into more private chat rooms and more encrypted forums. We're seeing them go to a lot of alternative platforms. When we look at this third tier, from a service perspective it's really important that we look at what triggers the CSIS mandate. We have done a lot of work in this space over the last couple of years with our partners in the S and I community.

What do we require to actually investigate these threats? We need a willingness to kill or inspire others to kill; a threat of serious violence; an attempt to effect societal change, so not just a personal narrative but something bigger; and an ideological influence. Once we have those triggers, we're able to investigate these threats. We deconflict on a regular basis with our police colleagues, especially the RCMP, and then we decide who's best positioned to deal with them.

I hope that answers your question.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):

Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for enlightening us on some of these issues that are increasingly concerning.

First of all, perhaps Mr. Hahlweg could deal with this question.

It's been suggested to us by the NSICOP report that there are more than 300 of these types of groups, IMVE groups, active in Canada. That seems to be an enormous

number. Is it the tier three that makes them a group? How organized do they have to be to be considered such?

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

It's a great question.

I would respond first by saying that this is how complex this investigative effort we undertake is, because a lot of the personal grievances and a lot of the conspiracy theories are not tied to one solid ideology that motivates a lot of other people. There are a lot of individuals who might move from one to another very quickly. From a CSIS perspective, it is absolutely crucial that we reach the threshold of violence or threat of violence and the four steps I talked about a little bit earlier before we can actively investigate.

In terms of the overall numbers, yes, if we look at this like a funnel, in that top tier I discussed, there are hundreds of different narratives out there, different ideologies, different conspiracy theories. A lot of that still falls into the free speech space. A lot of those individuals will just remain passive. They will not mobilize to violence, ergo not affect our act, from a CSIS perspective.

I hope that answers your question.

Mr. Jack Harris:

It does to some extent.

In these tier-three groups—I guess that's where these 300 we're talking about are—is there any one particular type? We're talking about the propensity to violence or plans for violence or suggestions of violence. Is there a predominant group in the 300? We don't have 300 categories. We have outlined several, such as those motivated by a particular ideology or white supremacy or anti-authority or xenophobia, with some overlap obviously.

Can you categorize those for us and tell us what the predominant group is, if there is one?

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

The predominant ideologies are the ones I discussed at the outset. Those are the ones from our perspective anyway. The neo-Nazis and ethnonationalists are one of the major groups. Anti-authority and targeting government and law enforcement is also an ideology, both in the United States and here, that is of concern. Some of the attacks I mentioned that have taken place on our soil were driven in whole or in part by a gender-driven violent misogyny ideology. Then the other category we discussed involves somebody who doesn't have an affixed ideology but who has some personal grievances and a lot of different things going on. Again, those are the predominant ideologies, but there's a lot of movement in that space. The fluidity of that space makes it one of the most complex to investigate.

I'll defer to my other colleagues, but I'll say I've been in this business for well over 20 years and have been actively engaged in these investigations for a long time, and it is a complicated space for all of us. However, with our various mandates working in concert and together, I think we're making a dent in not only identifying and making sure we are up on the threat.... To do that, in all honesty, from a CSIS perspective, we have to ensure we have the right mandate. We have to ensure we have the right tools

at our disposal, and that includes having modernized legislation to make sure we can deal with these threats as they emerge.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Jack Harris:

Can you tell us whether you have figured out—and this is probably something that you all wonder about—what motivates an individual, or can you identify what triggers someone to move from tier two to tier three? Is that something beyond your ken or are you just watching to see what happens?

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

It's definitely something we analyze every day, all day.

The movement between the tiers is an interesting one. Unlike in a lot of the RMVE or other groups, the movement can happen very quickly. People can mobilize to that third tier and mobilize to violence very quickly. We've seen it go from the first tier to the third tier without much warning in between. We've also seen the opposite. We've seen that people have gotten to that third tier and have said, "Oh, boy, we didn't realize this was what we were getting into", and they have moved back to that more passive space.

We've really seen a mixed bag on this, but it is absolutely something we monitor actively.

Mr. Jack Harris:

I have a quick question. The Proud Boys were declared a terrorist group and have disbanded. What does that mean? Does that mean they have dispersed into other groups? That doesn't mean that they've changed their ideology, thoughts or beliefs, I wouldn't think. What do you think happens?

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

I'm not sure on that case. I can't speak of things that were monitored actively in the investigation space.

The Proud Boys are probably indicative of a lot of other areas. There will be some pockets of it. The broader ideology might be mobilized to violence. There will be others who are still up in that top tier. It doesn't mean—just because somebody is a Proud Boy—that they're actively mobilized to violence.

We see that different strata all the time in these groups. That's what makes it very difficult to monitor actively.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all of the witnesses for being with us here today and enlightening us on this very important topic.

I'm just going to follow the previous line of questioning with Mr. Hahlweg, if you don't mind.

There's been quite a bit of talk today about the three different categories of motivation for violent extremism. I wonder how important it is to define those different categories. For example, one of the witnesses mentioned the 21 deaths that occurred at the hands of ideologically motivated extreme actors, one of them being the Quebec

mosque shooting. I would have thought that maybe that falls within the religiously motivated.

How important is it, Mr. Hahlweg, to get those categorizations right? How is that a tool for CSIS to keep Canadians safe and for prosecutions?

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

I think it's an outstanding question. Thank you.

The way we look at this is from a service lens. I can articulate that the mosque shooting.... We look at things that trigger our act. In section 2 of our act, paragraph (c) is what defines whether or not we get involved from a service perspective—the serious acts of violence. Whether that falls into the RMVE space, the religiously motivated, or the IMVE space, that is actually where we mobilize and prioritize our investigative activity from an internal perspective. It is the trigger of our paragraph 2(c) threshold in our mandate that dictates whether or not we're going to go into that space.

I think it is very important to really articulate—and it's why we chose to do so in 2019 in the IMVE space—the complexity of this investigation so that we can actively portray what is going on and can actively decide when our threshold and our mandate is triggered. Otherwise, that deconfliction with the RCMP and others in the community is crucial. At the end of the day, we're all looking to prevent threats of violence.

Mr. Tako Van Popta:

Thank you.

What tools does that give you for prosecution? You talked about the four trigger points. Maybe you could just expand on that a little bit so that I understand it better.

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

It's a very good point that you made on prosecution. That is the lane of our good friends at the RCMP and other police jurisdictions.

From a CSIS perspective, those four triggers, as we've called them—the willingness to inspire others to kill others; serious violence; attempting to affect societal change; and ideological influence.... It is very crucial for us to go through all of these steps to understand what the individual is doing in these spaces so that we can make sure that we deconflict with our counterparts to understand who is best positioned to deal with this threat. Is it the RCMP? Is it local law enforcement, or is it a service perspective, where that person hasn't gone to that outer extreme and we might be able to inform others so that they can fulfill their mandate a little bit more effectively?

Mr. Jack Harris:

Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to go back to Mr. Hahlweg from CSIS.

You have your third tier. You've identified these groups as having the propensity for some violent activity. You indicate that this meets a threshold for, I presume, your powers to take disruptive action.

Can you tell us what kind of disruptive action CSIS might undertake in these circumstances? What tools do you have? What kinds of things do you do?

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

Unfortunately, in this venue—and I really do appreciate the question—I can't get into operational methodologies or discuss what we do in that space. I can say, though, given the nature of the IMVE threat and the importance that we put on it as an organization, we've dedicated a number of resources, as I mentioned earlier. Our regional offices and overseas offices are connected with foreign partners to understand this threat a bit more.

We have a number of tools at our disposal. There are more, and we need to make sure that we have them in our tool box. Some of that is going to require looking at the CSIS Act to make sure sure that tools are fit for purpose so that we can properly identify and deal with all of these threats.

A big part of the issue, though, is deconflicting early and often with our law enforcement partners and making sure that our respective mandates are brought to bear in fulsome—

Mr. Jack Harris:

I'm sorry. You're chewing up time, but you're not telling us anything. Thank you very much for your attempt.

Are there many occasions when people are being recruited to, for example, the Azov battalion in Ukraine? We have identified 14 Canadians travelling to the Ukraine to train with extremists. Is that common?

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

In the early days there was some travel to various countries under the IMVE rubric. Given the COVID-19 restrictions, we've seen a lot less of that travel, obviously, for a variety of reasons. We're very actively monitoring that type of activity.

Mr. Jack Harris:

This would be part of recruitment. Is that also active in these organizations?

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

I would say it's a whole host of things. It's recruitment, getting together and networks. It's all of those things.

Mr. Joël Lightbound:

Thank you.

My next question is for the CSIS representatives.

You were mentioning that the COVID-19 crisis amplified not only xenophobic sentiment among certain groups, but also anti-government and anti-authority attitudes.

Was there a shift from some groups that were more xenophobic, to conspiracy theories and anti-government, anti-authority, and anti-public health measures?

There were media reports, for example, that many members of an overtly xenophobic group with a particular presence in Quebec, the Meute, had redirected themselves to anti-public health and conspiracy-minded groups.

Have you observed this change?

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

It's a great question. Yes, we do. We see that movement often. That movement happens quite frequently when there's a new social event that galvanizes either a conspiracy theory or some individual intent to act.

Specifically with COVID-19, we have seen various groups that previously weren't aligned, or individuals who perhaps were not sharing the same ideology or the same motivation, come together under a common cause, whether that is anti-government activity or anti-vaccination activities.

We see that fluidity very often. It makes our investigative efforts extremely difficult. It makes our analytical efforts difficult. It's very important for all of us witnesses today to be able to identify those threats early and often, so that we can make sure we're well positioned to identify them and inform the government accordingly.

Mr. Joël Lightbound:

My question is again for CSIS members.

You mentioned earlier in your testimony that these ideologically driven violent extremism groups moved more quickly from one third party to another than in groups driven by religious ideology.

Why is this the case?

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

There are many factors to that, in answering your question, but one of the factors is that there's no common ideology that binds these groups. They come from very different vectors of society. They have different personal grievances. They come together for one specific purpose and then they diffuse again and go elsewhere.

In the RMVE space, we have traditional threat actors that have one common ideology that they all follow. It's a very difficult and different circumstance, hence why we have really tried to identify and articulate the different groupings and why it is that these activities are different.

Mr. Damien Kurek:

I'll ask this question again.

Are there any specific tools that are needed to ensure that law enforcement and investigative authorities have the necessary tools required to accomplish the objectives and mandates that you have?

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

Bravely....

I'll give you one example. We are quite proud of the work we're doing in the service on our outreach. We've been actively engaged with academia and with biopharma during the COVID pandemic. We've been engaged with NSERC about FI threats to various educational institutions. We're really out there and we're engaging.

One of the things that we have an issue with and we're trying to address is that, in our engagement with non-security-cleared individuals, under section 19 of our act, we are allowed to provide only unclassified information. This makes it difficult for us to really provide to the community the information they need that is useful to protect them and to make sure they're resilient against the threats that are coming our way.

When we talk about this service and the CSIS Act not being fit for purpose, this is one of the things that I think we need to look at in the future.

Mr. Damien Kurek:

I'm very curious about the foreign influence aspect of this and some of the efforts to destabilize our democracy. I'm wondering if there are any comments that any of you—maybe CSIS s.38 —have on those foreign influences and their impact on Canada related to IMVE.

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

I can start.

Foreign interference is one of the most important strategic threats to Canada's national security. The CSIS director has mentioned this at numerous venues. It undermines Canadian sovereignty, our national interests and specifically our values. It is a very complex threat.

It's also a national threat. It targets all levels of government, as you know, in communities all across the country. The threat activity has always been persistent in the FI space in Canada, but the scale, speed, range and impact have grown considerably as a result of globalization and technology. It encompasses a range of techniques, including human intelligence operations, s.38 s.38

I'm sure my colleague s.38 can talk further to that, but it is a significant threat that we are absolutely seized with from a CSIS perspective.

Ms. Kamal Khera:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to all our witnesses for being here and, more importantly, for all the work you do.

My question is for CSIS.

Back in 2010-11, Canadians were informed by the government of the day that right-wing extremism has not been a significant problem in Canada and that the antics of certain high-profile white supremacists were extremely rare.

Since that time, we've seen the proliferation of threats posed by IMVE, such as incels and those inspired by xenophobia. How can we explain this growth? Were these threats always significant and perhaps not addressed, or was there truly a rapid increase that may have been spurred by external forces over the past few years?

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

It's a very good question. It's a complicated question.

If I go back in time to when we still had the nomenclature of right-wing extremism and we had the attacks in Quebec and some other attacks.... At that time, just for context, we were dealing, in 2014, with the attacks against Parliament Hill and a lot of other attacks that fit more into the religiously motivated violent extremism category. This is an exercise that all of us undertake at all times. It's reprioritizing threats and allocating the resources to deal with those threats.

With the re-emergence of IMVE and the recalibration that we took as a service, we absolutely saw, with regard to the second part of your question, a more sophisticated threat actor than we had seen before. You had new online tools. You had new ways of communication. You had accelerated interaction whereby these people could sit in their

basements and never have to meet face to face. This accelerated the IMVE space, and it has actually grown ever since then, making it very difficult and complex to follow.

Thank you.

Ms. Kamal Khera:

Thank you for that.

I have an additional question for CSIS or even, perhaps, the RCMP. We are aware that gender-based violence is a very serious threat, and I know that we're developing a national strategy to address it. In your opening remarks for CSIS, you did mention that one of the faces of this violence is misogyny. Can you, perhaps, explain a little bit further how IMVE is gender-driven?

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

When we look at groups such as incels, involuntary celibates, that ideology bears many of the hallmarks of many more traditionally recognized ideologies, from our perspective.

Incels belong to a misogynistic community of males. They, like most others, associate primarily through online platforms. They use a unified terminology. They're not really an organized group, from our perspective, and they have no centralized structure or planning. They believe, though, at their core, that their genetics determine the quality of their life and relationships, meaning that they blame their unattractive physical features for their inability to attract women. They attribute their perceived failings in life to women and society in general.

We're also seeing subcategories of these types of ideologies. The manosphere is one that has cropped up. This is a network of online misogynistic and male-supremacy communities talking about men's rights issues to glorify the violence in violent misogyny. These subgroups are very concerning to us.

From a service perspective, I would say that not all of them are are violent. From a service perspective, in terms of the act and meeting our threshold, a lot of that activity takes place in that first tier that I was talking about. However, it is absolutely something that is concerning from a national perspective.

Thank you.

Mr. Jack Harris:

Thank you, Chair.

With regard to my first question, perhaps the representative from CSIS could deal with this as well.

We have, of course, reports of activity by extremist groups within the military. The gentleman, Mr. Hurren—I call him a gentleman, not advisedly perhaps—who went to Rideau Hall with a truckload of weapons and broke down the gate, was a military reservist.

We're told that there are pockets of supporters of the extremist view within the military. Do you actively engage in investigations regarding the military, or is that left to the military police?

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

Thank you for your question.

The service is actively involved and engaged with the military on IMVE and all other manners of threat activity. What I can say is that, if there's an individual within the military who meets our threshold to investigate or engage our TRM authority, just because they're in the military won't stop us from doing our job.

We actively engage with the military in terms of education—frontline education. We get out there and tell them about the things they might want to look for, and if they are concerned, these are some of the things we are seeing analytically, investigatively, on IMVE, to try to educate them so that they're better able to spot some of these issues on their own.

Mr. Jack Harris:

According to statistics, we know there are about 1,250 police officers in the military police, so they have a lot of personnel.

Has your service noticed, perhaps more often than not, that you have military personnel you come across? Is that something that happens often? Do you refer them to military police, or do you carry on as if it were anybody else?

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

While I can't get into specific investigative activities or files, I can say that, globally, the IMVE phenomenon has increased. In every pocket of society, we're seeing more of that activity. I think it might be natural that we're seeing that in that area as well, and we're actively engaged in dialogue with our DND colleagues.

Mr. Tako Van Popta:

Thank you. I have just a quick question for CSIS.

CSIS has identified Daesh and al Qaeda as being particularly organized on the Internet to raise funds, to recruit and to organize. Is there the same degree of sophistication and threat from IMVE organizations or individuals?

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

Thank you for the question.

I would say that the traditional organizations had a lot longer to get organized. Therefore, they are able to do that a lot more frequently and in a sustained fashion. Given the fluidity that I described of the IMVE threat and the not so much connective tissue with the various individuals there, I would say the RMVE methodology is probably still very tried and true.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.):

Thank you, Chair.

I would like to thank all of our witnesses for being here with us to answer our questions today.

Before I forget and if you don't mind, could you submit to the committee after this meeting the breakdown of the 273 ideologically motivated violent extremists events that took place in Canada?

My question is for CSIS. It's kind of along the lines of something you already mentioned. You mentioned the involuntary celibates group, which is a group that I've researched in the past. You said that they are not really a violent group, but that they are more online. However, that's not true. Alek Minassian drove into a crowd of

pedestrians in Toronto killing 10 people in 2018 and posted on Facebook that the incel rebellion had begun.

What more does it take for a group to be considered violent?

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

I apologize if I misspoke on that, but that's not what I said. I think what I said was that not all people in that group are violent. There certainly absolutely are, and he represents one of those individuals, for sure, so I totally agree. Once they mobilize to that level of violence, absolutely that is meeting our threshold from a CSIS perspective.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:

Thank you very much.

In your testimony earlier you mentioned several of the different incidents that have taken place—including Christchurch, the Quebec City mosque, Pittsburgh—that were attacks against specific religious groups. We talked about addressing online harms and implementing "red flag" laws as measures to ensure that people who pose a risk to others do not have access to firearms.

What additional measures can we take in order to detect and prevent such attacks in the future?

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

I would very much agree with that and add that, from our perspective, getting out into the communities and educating people as to what that looks like and what people should be advising the police is extremely important. This committee and the work you're doing is also very beneficial in getting the word out and showing people that the government is taking this issue seriously.

The Chair:

I'll just direct that question to Mr. Hahlweg as well.

CSIS gets in before the police get in, shall we say? It is an investigation. It's not evidence.

I'm sure you've made some observations about mental illness and some of these individuals. I'm just curious as to what your thoughts are.

Mr. Timothy Hahlweg:

Like our RCMP colleagues, we have absolutely seen more of this. We have become very alive to some of the mental health indicators that allow us to make better assessments at the front end in terms of what we can or should be doing from an investigative perspective.

A lot of our work involves dealing with community members who might be better served to pre-emptively deal with individuals, rather than provoking investigative authorities from CSIS.